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ARA/CMA:RMSayre:jr
(Drafting Office and Officer)

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POL 33-1 MEX-US
MEX-27/1

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: April 18, 1963

SUBJECT: Salinity Problem on Lower Colorado River

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Carrillo Flores - Ambassador of Mexico
Mr. Sayre - CMA

COPIES TO:

ARA
CMA - Mr. Sayre - 3 (1 cc)
US-IEWC - 2 (1 cc)
L
Interior
White House - Mr. Dungan
White House - Dr. Weisner
Ambassy, Mexico - 2 (1 cc)

APR 23 1963

The Ambassador said he had been instructed by the Foreign Office to convey to the Department his Government's serious concern about the salinity problem and the nature of proposals that the United States has under consideration for solving the problem. He showed Mr. Sayre the instructions which he has received which read in translation as follows:

"You may inform (the Department of State) orally that the preliminary review of the (Bureau of Reclamation) report has produced a distressing reaction among us because we believe that the measures which are recommended do not comply with the spirit of the conversations which took place between the two Presidents nor with the provisions of the Water Treaty."

The Ambassador recalled the conversations which had taken place between the two Presidents in which he participated. He said that President Kennedy had remarked that the action of the Wellton-Mohawk irrigation district was not in keeping with the spirit of the Water Treaty. The Ambassador said the phrase in his instructions had been chosen with President Kennedy's remark in mind. He said that Mexico's position is that a permanent solution should reduce the high salinity of the water throughout the year. His Government did not regard as an adequate or permanent solution measures which only "alleviated" the problem. He recalled his meeting with President Kennedy on February 28 and expressed his concern that he had not made his Government's position clear. He felt he may

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not have emphasized sufficiently the political difficulty it is giving the Lopez Mateos Administration or the use the Communists in Mexico are making of the issue to enhance their political position and promote anti-Americanism. Mr. Sayre said that the President understood the problem very well and he doubted that there was any misunderstanding on his part as to Mexico's views.

The Ambassador inquired why there should be any problem with the presentation of the issue to the International Court. He said that there was an honest difference of opinion as to the meaning of the Treaty and he thought that two friendly Governments should be able to submit such a dispute to a third party for resolution. Mr. Sayre said that we hoped the matter could be resolved by the adoption of a practical program. The Ambassador recalled that he had tried to get the United States to agree to refer the legal issue to the International Bank or the Inter-American Bank. He mentioned the mediation efforts of Eugene Black on the Indus River problem between India and Pakistan. Mr. Sayre said he recalled this, but that he thought the situation was different because the United States and Mexico had a Treaty on the subject whereas a treaty did not exist with respect to the Indus River. The Ambassador said he had pressed his Government strongly to present its rehabilitation program for the Mexicali Valley to the International Bank, but had been unsuccessful. He felt that the Bank's review of the program would have solved the factual question as to whether the water which the United States is now delivering is usable. He anticipated that the Bank would have refused to finance the project if it found that the water could not be used even with improved irrigation works. He said he had not been successful because his Government believed that such action would have been an admission by Mexico that the salinity problem was a soils problem in the Mexicali Valley. His Government was firmly convinced this was not the case and did not want to take any action on its part to prejudice its position.

Mr. Sayre said that the President's Science Adviser was studying certain technical points and we hoped he would be making his recommendations in the near future as to possible alternative courses of action. He said he would convey the Mexican Ambassador's message to the appropriate persons.

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